

FROM THE BENEFITS OFFICER



Pearl Gibson, Benefits Officer

Spring is here. Along with the warmer temperatures, beautiful flowers and green grass comes, you guessed it — allergies. An annual Achilles heel for our upper respiratory systems, allergens and the subsequent reactions they trigger are well known to many. If, however, you are well acquainted with this disorder, please see Health Notes and find out what you can do to reduce some of your symptoms.

Our goal is to educate you on health matters to help you make informed choices regarding your health. The Benefits Office is currently investigating the possibility of offering

healthcare to part-time and temporary employees. If you are in one of these groups, you should have received a survey designed to gauge your interest in health care coverage. Knowing your interest will play a vital role in helping the City of Memphis determine whether this is a feasible fringe benefit. Therefore, please complete the survey — it should take less than two minutes — and return it in the provided self-addressed stamped envelope. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

In 2008, we are focusing on wellness more than ever before and look forward to your participation in upcoming activities. Keep an eye out for additional information throughout the year so you don't miss out on the exciting wellness events we hope to bring to you. Our goal is "to help improve your quality of life one person at a time". We can achieve this goal... together.

And, as always, if you have questions and or concerns, please call us at (901) 576-6428 or 576-6761.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pearl Gibson".

Pearl Gibson

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Taking Care of Your Allergies

Few people have managed to go through life without suffering from allergies. Signs of an allergic reaction to such allergens as pollen, grass and other harbingers of spring often include sneezing, itchy and/or watery eyes, and a runny or stuffy nose. Headaches are common too. Other common allergens include dust and animal dander. Some people even suffer from allergies throughout the year.

YOU CAN RUN; BUT YOU CAN'T HIDE

Allergy triggers are everywhere. You may not be able to avoid them all; but, these tips can help:

- Stay inside when the pollen count is high.
- Keep windows closed. Use air-conditioning when you can and change your unit's filters often.
- Vacuum carpets regularly or use washable rugs on bare floors.
- Pollen gets on your pet's fur, so bathe pets often. Better yet, have someone else bathe them. And, don't allow pets in your bedroom.
- Put plastic zippered covers on mattresses and pillows.

WHEN ALLERGIES HIT:

- Drink plenty of fluids each day.
- Avoid smoke and other things that make you feel worse.
- Don't blow your nose too hard.
It can cause infection to spread inside.
- When you lie down, keep your head raised on pillows. It will help sinuses drain.
- Ask your doctor about taking medicine.
If it's OK, take it when you first start to feel sick. Don't wait until you feel really bad.
- Allergies can make you feel tired. Try to rest.

GET SOME RELIEF

Some medicines provide relief from allergy symptoms. You can go to the local drugstore and pick up some medicine. If you don't experience relief, your doctor can write you a prescription for a drug they may be more effective. Even if you find relief from a drug over the counter, always talk with your doctor as he or she can tell you about what remedy is best for you.

Allergy medicines sometimes have side effects. They may make you sleepy or nervous. You may be told not to drive or use machinery. Read the label. Pay close attention to any warnings and always follow your doctor's instructions carefully.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that smoking is the leading preventable cause of death killing more than 400,000 in the United States each year? These deaths can be directly linked to lung cancer, COPD (chronic obstruction pulmonary disease) and ischemic heart disease.

Smoking reduces your life span by 14 years. Researchers estimate that 26 percent of Tennesseans smoke at an annual cost of \$1,000 to \$2,000 per year. Greater than \$167 billion in annual healthcare costs can be attributed to smoking.

Smoking is addictive and therefore a very difficult habit to quit. Maybe we can help you "Kick the Habit". Look for more information on this topic over the next couple of months if you are interested in being smoke free.



IN OTHER NEWS... the Nationwide Retirement Solutions Office has moved to:

2670 Union Ave. Extended
Suite 915
Memphis, TN 38112
(901) 323-4154 or 323-4270
(901) 323-4370 (fax)

CALENDAR

April 3, 2008

Library Retiree
Meeting
10 a.m.,

Benjamin L. Hooks Jr.
Central Library

April 4, 2008

Martin Luther King
Memorial

Offices Closed

April 29, 2008

Healthcare Committee
Meeting
10:30 a.m.,

City Hall – City Council
Conf. RM, 5th Fl.

May 26, 2007

Memorial Day

Offices Closed

June 1-30

DROP enrollment
City Hall, Room 428

8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

RETIREES CORNER

Health plan participants who are at least 60 years old can now receive the shingles vaccine at The Shot Nurse, our health plan's only In-Network provider. There are two Shot Nurse locations:

- 1) 4646 Polar Ave. Suite 100 and
- 2) 714 Germantown Parkway, Suite 11.

Call either location at (901) 685-9999 for more information. Or call the Benefits Office at (901) 576-6761.

Participants must pay the initial vaccination costs, but can file for reimbursement by forwarding their receipt to:

United HealthCare

ATTN: Gertie Ryan

871 Ridgeway Loop Road

Memphis, TN 38120

The Benefits CONNECTION

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and suggestions are welcome
at (901) 576-6761.

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The Benefits CONNECTION

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